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The Future of Soviet Military Forces in Germany [REDACTED]

A Research Paper

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The Future of Soviet Military Forces in Germany [REDACTED]

A Research Paper

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The Future of Soviet Military Forces in Germany [REDACTED]

Summary

Information available
as of 12 December 1990
was used in this report.

The almost 600,000 Soviet military and civilian personnel in Germany associated with the Soviet Western Group of Forces (WGF) will be withdrawn within the next four years in accordance with an agreement worked out between German Chancellor Kohl and Soviet President Gorbachev in July 1990, although Moscow would probably be amenable to a shortened timetable. The Soviets and Germans both want the withdrawal to proceed smoothly and are taking steps to minimize tensions. Bonn and Moscow remain worried, however, that declining morale and discipline within the WGF and signs of German public hostility toward the forces could spark an increasing number of violent incidents and a surge in desertions. The manner in which the two governments handle the withdrawal could have domestic repercussions in the Soviet Union, affect German-Soviet bilateral relations, and influence German attitudes toward a continued US/NATO military presence. [REDACTED]

The problems plaguing the WGF are well documented and are receiving increasing attention in the media and high levels of the German Government. They include:

- *Declining morale and discipline.* Soviet forces are surrounded by a hostile population, have experienced a decline in living standards since the introduction of the deutsche mark on 1 July, and face the prospect of returning home to even worse conditions.
- *Increased crime.* German authorities report a sharp increase in the number of criminal acts involving Soviet soldiers, or in which their involvement is suspected. Many of the reported cases involve theft of basic necessities, including food.
- *Black market activities and sales of weapons.* Some Soviet troops, in an effort to secure hard currency, are willing to sell almost anything they can get their hands on. German authorities are particularly concerned that weapons and ammunition being sold or missing from inventories—possibly including surface-to-air missiles—could fall into the hands of terrorists and other political extremists.
- *Desertions.* Reports on the number of deserters from the Soviet forces are incomplete, but we believe there were several hundred desertions between January and early November 1990, of which fewer than 75 formally

applied for asylum. German authorities—who are legally bound to protect asylum seekers until their cases can be heard—expect this number to increase sharply once a schedule for withdrawals is reached.

- *Attacks by German citizens.* Although the number of larger public demonstrations against the presence and activities of the Soviet forces has declined since the Kohl-Gorbachev agreement last summer, there have been continued sporadic physical attacks against Soviet personnel and facilities. As of late October, however, the number of troops killed probably was still less than 10 [REDACTED]

Despite these negative trends, the Germans and Soviets still regard the existing situation and level of tension as manageable, and both sides are taking actions in an effort to keep things under control. The German-Soviet treaty on the withdrawal of Soviet forces, signed on 12 October, will significantly reduce Soviet military activities. The treaty also mandates a joint commission to resolve any differences that arise. The Soviets, for their part, have announced stricter regulations for soldiers leaving installations in an effort to minimize criminal activity and desertions. The Soviets will expect a maximum effort from German authorities and police to ensure the security of Soviet personnel and facilities. Bonn recognizes and accepts this. [REDACTED]

But things could go wrong. Anti-Soviet sentiment in Germany could be fueled further by media reports—some of which clearly have been exaggerated—about problems associated with the Soviet forces, or if hitches develop that appear to slow the withdrawal process. The Germans, who face possible tax increases and economic dislocations stemming from the unification process, could also come to resent the large costs associated with the Soviet withdrawal. Isolated Soviet attacks against German citizens could also occur. Finally, Soviet-German relations would come under serious strain in the less likely event mass desertions do take place and Bonn refuses to return those seeking asylum to Soviet authorities. [REDACTED]

As a result of the WGF's problems, German authorities assume that the Soviets will withdraw well before the December 1994 deadline, and there is reliable reporting that the two sides are talking about ways to speed the process. The main obstacles to a quick withdrawal are logistic and infrastructure problems. Estimates of the minimum time required vary widely, depending on—among other things—assumptions about whether the Soviets would choose to leave anything behind, how quickly facilities in the Soviet Union are readied to receive the personnel and materiel, and the

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extent to which German and Polish authorities are prepared to allow their transportation infrastructure to be monopolized to the detriment of their economies:

- [REDACTED]
- While there are several variables that will influence how rapidly the WGF will withdraw from Germany, we assess that the Soviets believe they can conduct an orderly and complete withdrawal of all personnel, equipment, and logistic stocks in three to four years. [REDACTED] the Soviets could withdraw their personnel and equipment from Germany in about 19 months, but only with additional German assistance and at the cost of leaving behind at least some logistic stocks. If, under extreme conditions, the political decision was made that the military had to withdraw in a few months, the WGF could do so, but would have to accept substantial losses in Germany (in the form of logistic stocks left behind) and in the Soviet Union (deterioration of stocks due to inadequate storage facilities).
- The housing situation in the Soviet Union, which Soviet military officials have admitted is desperate, has been a major cause of deteriorating morale of officers stationed in Germany. [REDACTED]

Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States all have a stake in how smoothly the Soviet withdrawal occurs:

- A disorderly, hasty withdrawal could lead to tensions within the Soviet military, increased Soviet domestic criticism of Gorbachev's foreign policy, and strained relations with Germany that could jeopardize needed economic and technical assistance.

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- The Germans, for their part, may be forced to cope with law-and-order problems, a divisive political debate over the asylum policy, and additional Soviet requests for money to facilitate the withdrawal—all of which could undercut support for Kohl and be exploited by political extremists.
- Bad publicity generated by the actions of Soviet forces on such matters as environmental issues could lead to closer German scrutiny of the practices of all military forces, including US forces. And, if German ire directed at the Soviet forces leads to more general antforeign sentiment, there could be a ground swell of support for the removal of all foreign forces from German soil. ~~SECRET~~

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The Future of Soviet Military Forces in Germany

Introduction

German Chancellor Kohl and Soviet President Gorbachev agreed in July 1990 that the 380,000 Soviet troops now in eastern Germany—the Soviet Western Group of Forces (WGF)—would be withdrawn within four years after unification. The Soviets and Germans both worry that problems associated with the continued Soviet presence—particularly public opposition and internal WGF problems—could lead to incidents and tensions that could damage bilateral relations. This Research Paper examines several issues associated with the Soviet presence, including Soviet and German attitudes toward it, sources of tension, and the new legal basis for the Soviet presence, as well as things that could go wrong and their implications for the Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States.

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German Attitudes Toward the Soviet Presence

German officials accept a transitional Soviet presence as necessary to help Gorbachev deal with domestic Soviet opposition to a united Germany. Politically, the Germans believe that acquiescence in a temporary Soviet presence helped Gorbachev swallow German NATO membership by minimizing perceptions that the Soviets were being "ousted" from the former German Democratic Republic. German officials understand, moreover, that it would be physically impossible to move Soviet personnel, equipment, and supplies out of eastern Germany overnight.

The attitude of the eastern German public toward the Soviet presence is difficult to gauge, in part because of a dearth of polling data. An overwhelming majority of eastern Germans—~~_____~~—favored the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe. ~~_____~~ eastern Germans had a generally favorable view of the Soviet

Union and Gorbachev. Gorbachev, in our view, is widely credited by eastern Germans for having created the conditions which facilitated the democratization of the GDR and German unification. West German press reports at the time of the revolution in the GDR in the fall of 1989 claimed that many eastern Germans viewed the Soviet military presence as having prevented East German security forces from firing on demonstrators. ~~_____~~

Most eastern German public opposition to the Soviet presence so far has come in the form of petitions and demonstrations against burdens associated with military activities, such as environmental damage caused by Soviet forces, aircraft noise, and competition prior to unification for scarce goods in the marketplace. Reports of incidents indicating popular opposition to the Soviet presence increased in the spring of 1990, a reflection of the fact that Germans in the then-GDR were for the first time free to demonstrate. The number of demonstrations has declined, however, since Kohl and Gorbachev agreed in midsummer that Soviet forces would be withdrawn. ~~_____~~

There are a number of indications that anti-Soviet sentiment in eastern Germany may be increasing at the same time demonstrations against Soviet military activities have dropped off. Physical attacks by eastern Germans against individual Soviets have increased, according to press and other reporting, as have other overt manifestations of anti-Soviet sentiment. This increased eastern German hostility toward the Soviet presence probably is in response to actions of the WGF and its members, as well as to the emergence of more general xenophobic sentiment. For example, eastern Germans are beginning to feel the sharp economic pinch from unification at the same time that Germany is beginning to make large payments to the Soviet Union. ~~_____~~

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Figure 1. View inside a Soviet garrison near Berlin.

German officials increasingly are becoming frustrated with the Soviets as well:

- In July an East German Army publication included an article entitled "Environmental Crime in the Colors of the Soviet Military." It called on the Soviet forces to practice environmental principles of "civilization and culture."

- According to press reports, local politicians from all over eastern Germany, speaking on 19 September before the East German Volkskammer's Committee for Disarmament and Defense, complained about aircraft noise, firing exercises, traffic violations, and problems in cooperation with WGF authorities in their areas. The committee chairman noted that problems with Soviet troops "are growing in importance."

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- According to other press reports, senior Social Democratic Party politicians planned to use a meeting with Gorbachev on 21 September to urge a hastening of the Soviet withdrawal "to make sure that the tension between the Germans and Russians does not become more than it is now."

[REDACTED]

German officials clearly want to contain tensions between eastern Germans and the Soviet forces, as well as discourage incidents—including isolated shootings of Soviet soldiers by German citizens—that could provoke a Soviet backlash.

[REDACTED]

There is even anecdotal evidence that some eastern Germans actually feel sorry for the predicament of Soviet soldiers faced with the prospect of returning to the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, the Soviets will be inviting targets for more extremist elements of German society for the remainder of their stay in eastern Germany. Those Germans willing to physically attack Soviet troops or facilities admittedly are a minority. They are motivated, however, by anti-Soviet or more general xenophobic sentiments and will not necessarily be placated by any actions the Soviets might take to reduce tensions with German citizens. Only effective and determined German law enforcement efforts are likely to deter attacks on the Soviet forces by extremists.

Soviet and WGF Perspectives

By accepting in principle the eventual pullout of their troops from eastern Germany, the Soviet leadership has acknowledged that the WGF will no longer be a

first line of defense for the USSR. Moscow's insistence on a four-year timetable for troop pullout was motivated by political, domestic, and military considerations. Politically, Gorbachev found it important to keep a sense of balance during the transition in Europe as a visual counter to German membership in NATO. At the same time, he needed to avoid sudden destabilization of the European balance of forces in order to give the USSR a continued voice in major European decisions. Domestically, a transition period for removing forces allowed time for the Soviet public to adjust to the "loss" of the GDR. Apart from the purely logistic problems of moving military forces built up during a stay of 45 years in eastern Germany, the transition period was also needed to buy time for the Soviets to reabsorb their personnel, equipment, and logistic stocks domestically, a situation complicated by the simultaneous withdrawals of Soviet forces from elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The WGF, on the other hand, faces a different set of requirements. While Gorbachev's new thinking may have redefined Soviet security in terms of political factors, economic interests, and democratic values, it has not yet been totally accepted by a military establishment that is used to focusing on training, forward positions, and war-fighting capabilities. Already dissatisfied with the "loss" of Eastern Europe—and of the GDR in particular—senior military leaders nonetheless have to maintain maximum military cohesion, avoid a disorganized—and by definition, hasty—withdrawal, and ensure that those returning to the USSR, particularly the officers, are housed and employed.

Military leaders, according to a variety of reporting, view the challenges they face from different perspectives, and, to some degree, inconsistently. There are differences of view, for example, on the optimum pace of the Soviet withdrawal. Some believe in the need to retain a military mission until after NATO forces are reduced, continue with business as usual, and delay withdrawal as long as possible. Others consider a speeded up withdrawal a necessity and view their mission as simple control of personnel, with garrisons becoming even more like prisons.

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Senior Soviet military leaders objected to speeding up withdrawal preparations:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Resistance from the military also showed up in negotiations between Soviet and German officials on the new stationing agreement. Military participants—who dominated the group—were recalcitrant on several issues, including German demands for a specific timetable to phase out Soviet forces by 1994, restrictions placed on military movements outside garrisons, the handling of deserters, the number of military training flights, and air rights. Despite subsequent agreements on most issues, other issues remain unresolved, including handling of asylum seekers.

To complicate the issue, Soviet legislators have given notice that they want greater involvement in foreign policy decision making, particularly with regard to agreements on Germany. The legislators' concern

regarding the treatment of Soviet forces and families in the WGF came out during the discussion and passage—a day late—of draft legislation in the Supreme Soviet to rescind the 1975 Soviet-GDR treaty before the formal unification of Germany took place on 3 October. The legislators roundly criticized the Foreign Ministry for failing to keep them adequately informed, neglecting the welfare of Soviet forces and their families, getting inadequate security guarantees in return for German membership in NATO, and settling the German question “behind the backs” of the Supreme Soviet.

We believe likely developments in Germany will force the Soviets to adjust their mindset. Historically, the Soviets have viewed themselves as preserving a new social order and suppressing German fascist tendencies. They have seen their relationship with the Germans as one of conqueror and vanquished. Many Soviets almost certainly look on the eastern Germans as “traitors” who turned their backs on socialism and on the army that liberated them and paid for it in their own blood. They find it difficult to accept German behavior or the right of Germans to impose restrictions on their military activity.

In the past, the Soviets' disregard of German concerns has been evident in their treatment of environmental issues, an area of particular sensitivity to Germans. Oblivious to the effects of military maneuvers on German land, Soviet troops have often caused fires and major damage to forested areas and farmlands during exercises. According to diplomatic reporting, Soviet officers balk at criticism for this from the Germans and still react angrily at the mention of German protests against noise and environmental pollution. For example, they have characterized German demonstrations as “uncivilized” and the Germans as “unrealistic,” “demanding,” and “obnoxious” and defended the behavior of their soldiers as merely “doing their duty.”

Because the Soviet military is accustomed to being in command, problems could develop with senior Soviet officers who now are forced to find ways to deal with increasingly assertive German authorities, not just at

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the national level, but also at the local level. They will have to factor the political realities of a new Germany into their military planning. The restrictions in the new stationing agreement, moreover, will undoubtedly cramp the style of those Soviet commanders who continue to view their mission as guarding against the NATO presence in Germany and Europe. It will also complicate their ability to engage Soviet troops in training exercises and maneuvers, which would help to keep them occupied and distracted from the temptations facing them outside their garrisons as well as fulfill basic training functions.

The Soviets are beginning to recognize the potential for increased resentment toward their presence and this probably was the driving force for completion of the stationing agreements. They will expect the German police to be more effective in maintaining civil order, controlling demonstrations, and responding discreetly to criminal activity outside Soviet garrisons, and the Soviets are likely to establish more effective working relationships with the Germans as both sides become more experienced at bilateral liaison. Even with the stationing agreement completed, however, Soviet forces still find themselves operating in difficult circumstances and will continue to face many challenges before the deadline for total withdrawal. Nonetheless, we believe they probably will find this task manageable.

Challenges Confronting Soviet Forces

The living conditions of Soviet soldiers in eastern Germany—although traditionally poor—have deteriorated significantly in the past several months, according to a number of sources. By highlighting the attractiveness of the West and the bleak prospects of returning home, the declining living standards almost certainly have caused a parallel drop in morale and discipline among many Soviet servicemen:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The danger that plunging morale could pose serious discipline problems is already evident in the increase in the number of crimes committed by Soviet soldiers. Poorly paid Soviet conscripts have been suspected in numerous house and car break-ins, and even some more serious crimes. Painfully aware of the benefits of Western freedom and a capitalist market, Soviet soldiers are frustrated by a lack of hard currency to purchase readily available Western goods. Despite

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**A Soviet Soldier's Life in Germany:
Low Pay, Low Morale**

The WGF internal force structure contributes to the problems the Soviets are currently encountering with their troops in Germany. The Soviet military maintains a highly autocratic structure with strict divisions between officers and soldiers; commissioned officers have an almost aristocratic view of their profession.

Conscripts in Germany receive 7 rubles a month and a living allowance of DM 25 (about \$16). Soviet soldiers serve for two years and cannot take their families with them to Germany. They live in World War II-vintage barracks—as do many NATO forces in Western Europe—but many of the facilities occupied by the WGF are deteriorating through lack of maintenance. They bunk 15 to 20 per bay area and have little privacy or space for private property. In the barracks, conscripts—especially junior conscripts—are hazed and harassed, not only by their officers and NCOs, but also by senior soldiers or those with different ethnic backgrounds.

Soviet soldiers are confined to their bases, get no leave except as a reward for outstanding performance, and are rarely allowed into town, and then only in a group with a career NCO or a junior officer escort. The entire group is responsible for each member, and collective punishment may be administered for each member, because of an individual's offense. Nonetheless, this does not discourage drinking bouts, brawls, break-ins, and poaching, which are common occurrences.

Living conditions and lifestyle in Germany probably exacerbate the generally poor health of Soviet conscripts. Poor hygiene and sanitation and crowded accommodations cause a variety of diseases, many of which are unknown in most Western armies. Soldiers are provided poor-quality food, and since unification there are reports that the quantity of rations has been cut because of skyrocketing costs and various supply problems.

The primary motivation of enlisted troops is to survive their term of service and go home. Some cannot endure their term of service, however, and commit

suicide; others go on a crime spree or desert. Deserters are hunted down by members of their own units who are ordered to shoot to kill if necessary. In more extreme cases, attack helicopters have joined the hunt.

Growing public hostility toward Soviet troops in Germany has made life even more difficult for the troops. Soldiers have been harassed and even fired at from passing cars while standing on guard duty at night. As many as 10 have been killed recently, and all have been cautioned to protect themselves, but according to unconfirmed reporting, the instructions are confusing and too time consuming to allow for quick assistance in cases of danger. Soviet soldiers are generally told to fire a warning shot before returning fire.

When their active-duty term of service of two years is completed, conscripts are returned to the Soviet Union, primarily by air transport. They are taken to processing centers where troop tents are erected some three to four weeks in advance. Once their paperwork is processed, the men are issued a train ticket home and released into the reserve.

Soviet officers appear to be a privileged class when compared with an average conscript because benefits are highly skewed in their favor. Accompanied by their families, who live in Soviet apartment complexes near the garrisons, they are posted to Germany for five years and earn an average monthly wage of 400 rubles and a stationing allowance of approximately DM 1,000 (\$650). The monetary benefits have made assignment to Germany an attractive option. Even so, the lack of an experienced and knowledgeable NCO corps places heavy burdens on the junior officers. Junior officers often perform many of the tasks that are done by NCOs in NATO armies. These officers work long, arduous hours. Their quarters are as badly run down as troop billets. Many totally lack hot water, while some have no running water at all.

To supplement their pay, officers' wives often work on the German economy. In at least some WGF units in early 1990, however, all fraternization—particularly

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employment—between Soviet military and local Germans was discouraged. Many wives kept working and some families continued their private social contacts with Germans during the night, despite the risk of detection and the threat of being returned to the USSR. One officer admitted to achieving a higher standard of living through his wife's employment and his sale on the black market of spare vehicle parts, fuel, and oil appropriated from army supplies.

Soviet officers generally do not socialize with the eastern Germans and rarely marry them; however, in early September, eastern German police reported an increase in the number of Soviet women who were seeking German husbands to avoid returning to the USSR with their WGF spouses, according to a reliable source.

The stature that Soviet officers had in the past has disappeared, both in Germany and at home. Although the Soviet army was never well liked in eastern Germany, its officers were shown respect, even if it was due to the power they wielded as occupiers. Today, they are ignored, sold poor-quality food, and treated meanly by local Germans.

In spite of their problems in Germany, Soviet officers still view their tour as a grace period. The conditions facing them in the USSR hold little promise of a better life. Housing remains the most serious problem for returning military and has prompted protests by officers and their wives on several occasions. Career officers receive little help with reintegration into civilian life; a single payment of 100 to 150 rubles is normally provided to cover interim expenses.

being restricted to garrisons, they are nonetheless finding ways to leave their compounds; once out, they face the temptation of illegal activities, German hostility, and the likelihood of apprehension.

Statistics and reports on crimes committed by Soviet soldiers are sketchy and episodic:

- Then-GDR Disarmament and Defense Minister Eppelmann stated in August that crime was up 30 percent over the previous year.
- In the Potsdam area, crimes increased 65 percent over last year, with 409 charges brought against Soviet personnel, according to statistics released in September by the head of the area office of criminal investigation. Two-thirds of these were burglaries of restaurants, shops, and bungalows or thefts of vehicles and spare parts.
- In one of many incidents, Soviet soldiers who tried to burglarize an electronic store in Wittstock overturned their truck after a high-speed chase by German police, spilling grenades, cartridges, and fuel. The soldiers fled on foot into the woods, leaving the German police behind to prevent the truck from exploding.

Soldiers have also been suspected of selling weapons on the black market. Although senior Soviet officials deny that illegal arms dealing is a growing problem, many Soviets are offering rifles, pistols, equipment, and explosives for sale:

- Ten Soviet soldiers working in a military warehouse were arrested in May for selling handgrenades and ammunition to Germans.
- West Berlin divers removed 26 rifles, an automatic carbine and barrel, an antitank rocket, and three fragmentation and five concussion grenades—all of Soviet manufacture—from the Teltow Canal in August. These caches were traced to Soviet military supplies.
- According to German officials, Soviet troops—including junior officers—are selling assault rifles and ammunition for prices ranging from \$227 to \$650.

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The WGF also faces a problem with deserters, although the number of desertions may be exaggerated. Since unification, Soviet soldiers departing their garrisons enter "sovereign German territory." Exposed to the fruits of Western life and confronting the reality of returning to the Soviet Union, some would have a strong incentive to remain in the West. While the possibility for mass desertions exists, we believe it to have a low probability because of intraunit tensions in the Soviet military. Some recent claims in the German press about the number of Soviet deserters may be exaggerated, perhaps to justify changes in German law that would permit an agreement to return deserters to Soviet control. [REDACTED]

Nonetheless, a substantial number of Soviet desertions could take place in the next several months, especially if the Soviets and Germans fail to agree on some arrangements for handling deserters or improving living conditions for Soviet soldiers. Another problem is the increasing number of soldiers who go absent without leave to avoid abusive treatment from their superiors. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

There are indications that an increasing number of Soviet officers may desert as well. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Attacks by German citizens on Soviet troops and facilities, which have increased since July, are an additional headache for Soviet authorities. As of September, according to Soviet officials, soldiers had been shot or beaten up on at least 13 occasions by residents of Potsdam—five in August alone. We have several reports that Soviet guards have been told to protect themselves at night by standing in the shadows in order to be less visible to German attackers:

- A Soviet sentry was shot five times in the back at a base in Wismar—which is on the Baltic coast northwest of Rostock—and another soldier was shot dead near a highway; a sentry was also shot and killed at an ammunition dump in Perleberg.
- In mid-November, according to press reports, German authorities—at the request of the Soviets—began an investigation into the beating death near Potsdam of a 21-year-old Soviet officer.
- In Neuruppin, soldiers on a military patrol had to be hospitalized after an attack by Germans.
- In other incidents, according to US diplomatic reporting, a military school was bombarded with rocks, a "poison gas grenade" (NFI) was thrown at an army building, a military bus was sprayed with gunfire, and shots were fired at military barracks from a passing vehicle [REDACTED]

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Does Anyone Know How Many Soviet Deserters and Asylum Seekers There Have Been?

There is much confusion about how many Soviets have deserted during 1990. Weighing the conflicting reporting, we believe that about 75 Soviet soldiers formally applied for asylum in Germany between January and early November 1990. There are other soldiers, however, who simply are AWOL and do not intend to apply for asylum, or who have deserted and sought asylum with false identification papers, or who have fled to countries other than Germany, including returning to the USSR. Some reporting—none of which is confirmed—suggests the total number of deserters could be in the thousands, but we believe it more likely that the number is in the hundreds.

Here are some recent examples of the fragmentary and conflicting reporting on the deserter issue:

- On 11 October a Soviet major general claimed during an interview that only about 15 soldiers had deserted and that he did not know whether they had applied for asylum in Germany.
- Another German press report on 15 October, citing official sources, claimed that the number of Soviets seeking political asylum in West Berlin had declined to two per day, down from 10 per day before unification on 3 October.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- According to a German press report on 4 October, 26 Soviet soldiers had applied for asylum with Hessian authorities the previous week.
- Moscow Television News, citing WGF Headquarters, reported on 5 October that 200 desertions had occurred since November 1989.
- According to a German press report on 20 November, citing confirmation by the Interior Ministry in Bonn, 1,791 asylum applications from Soviet citizens had been received this year. Of these, 59 were reportedly deserters from the WGF.

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Soviet Efforts To Minimize Tensions

Like Bonn, Moscow wants to avoid any direct confrontations between Soviet forces and eastern Germans. Treaty negotiators have pressed the Germans to improve the delivery of Western goods and services to Soviet facilities, hoping to preclude forays by the soldiers to the outside, and the Soviets have continued to stress the need for an agreement on handling deserters. The restrictions placed by the stationing treaty on military training exercises and air flights will almost certainly help to reduce some current tensions. The Soviets believe that German assistance in housing construction for Soviet officers returning to the USSR will help to improve the morale of these soldiers and their families. [REDACTED]

Given the resentment of Soviet commanders toward the change in their status in Germany, the Soviet military appears to be unusually compliant to the increasing demands of the Germans, probably because of pressure from Moscow to maintain good relations:

- According to a German forestry official, the Soviets recently were forced by the Germans to repair maneuver damage at the Hundeluft state forest near Rosslau. The Germans claimed that this was not an authorized training area but was taken over "illegally" by the Soviets.

[REDACTED]

The Soviets also have been taking steps to reduce the visibility and annoyance value of their presence, thanks in part to greater attention paid to these problems by German officials and the media. For example, the Soviets have agreed, under heavy pressure from German authorities, to keep major convoys

off the roads in the Berlin area during peak civilian traffic hours; they have also imposed restrictions on firing at ranges after 2200 hours. The terms of the German-Soviet stationing agreement further reduce Soviet military activities and give the Germans greater authority in determining what can be done when. [REDACTED]

At the same time, the Soviets are also attempting to minimize criminal activity and desertions through an apparent tightening of controls over personnel in garrisons:

- The Soviets have announced new, stricter regulations for soldiers leaving installations and on contacts with German citizens. They also have instituted tighter controls to monitor soldiers dressed as civilians in areas such as railroad stations.
- The Soviets are considering organizing excursions into Berlin and across the former inner-German border in order to satisfy curiosity about the West. Senior officers claim that unauthorized trips are made mainly by warrant officers with access to vehicles who are intensely curious about the West; their unfamiliarity with Western traffic laws often results in arrests for traffic violations. [REDACTED]

The Soviets will probably try to further restrict travel by soldiers, increase the punishment for those caught outside Soviet garrisons, and more effectively enforce stricter regulations. They appear to have taken steps in this direction, according to reliable reports. Allied forces noted a reduction in incidents connected with unauthorized travel to West Berlin even before German unification; in the American sector, for example, apprehensions for crimes (mostly for shoplifting) fell from 14 in August to 4 in September. British and French officials noted a similar drop in the incident rate in their sectors. We believe this indicates that personnel were being subjected to harsher punishment for unauthorized travel and were therefore not committing minor crimes as frequently. The Soviets probably will have only limited success, however, because the officers go out "sightseeing" as well, making it difficult to curtail overall force AWOLs. [REDACTED]

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Moscow is aware that continued attention placed on WGF problems could adversely affect German and Soviet domestic sentiment and encourage increased desertions. To counter this, the Soviet military has tried to launch a public relations campaign that would legitimize the Soviet presence and portray it in a more favorable light:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As Bonn asserts greater control over the police forces in eastern Germany, cooperation with Soviet commanders on significant criminal activity will probably be more effective.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Soviet officials also have agreed to accept German sovereignty and full jurisdiction in crimes involving Soviet troops off their bases and have begun close cooperation with German authorities to control Soviet troops outside installations;

[REDACTED]

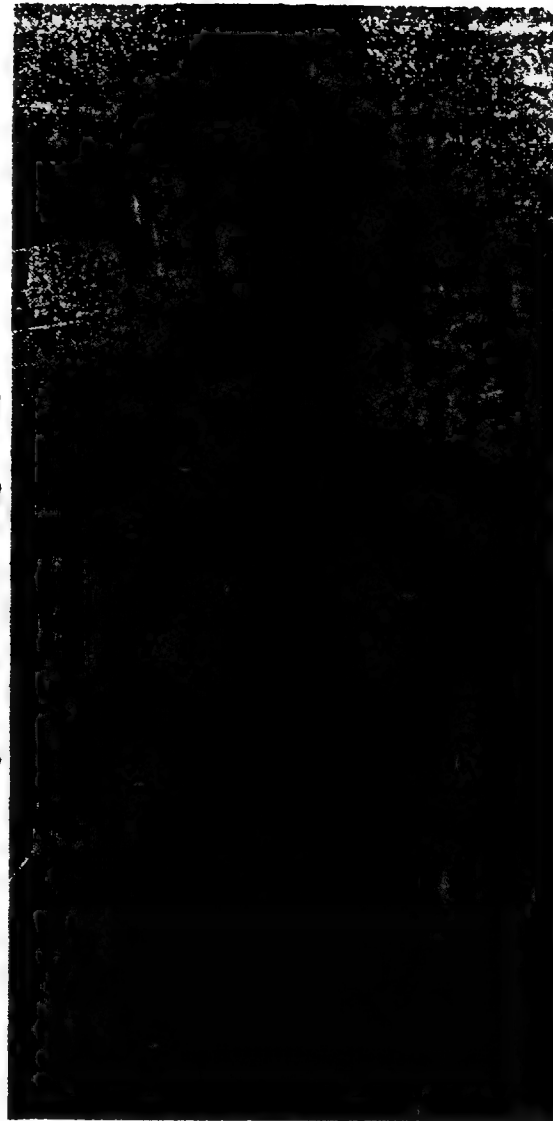


Figure 2. Soviet military paraphernalia on sale near the Brandenburg Gate.

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To help improve morale and curb discipline problems, Moscow will press for the early completion of German-funded housing for troops returning to the USSR and will expect the Germans to begin early implementation of an agreed program of vocational training for returning troops. The Germans are apparently in the process of finalizing plans to address both areas. [REDACTED]

New Agreements Governing the Soviet Presence

On 12 September 1990, Bonn and Moscow concluded a Transition Treaty dealing with the financial aspects of the Soviet withdrawal. The DM 13 billion package deal includes funds to compensate the Soviets for the additional costs of maintaining the WGF stemming from introduction of the deutsche mark in the GDR, finance construction of housing in the Soviet Union for returning forces, retrain Soviet troops for civilian jobs, and help finance transportation of Soviet forces. [REDACTED]

During their discussion with German Chancellery officials early in November, the Soviets expressed a willingness to pull all forces out of Germany before the agreed 1994 deadline if the Germans could construct adequate housing by the end of 1991. The Germans, who are equally anxious to see an early withdrawal, have negotiated an agreement with the Soviets to begin housing construction in 1991. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By prefabricating many of the needed components in Germany during this winter, the Germans hoped to meet the short construction deadline and preclude a delay in withdrawal. Both sides also agreed at that time that the new facilities would be built in the Russian Republic—despite Germany's desire to have them located as far to the east as possible—probably because Moscow was concerned that the other republics would be reluctant to provide sites for housing the officers and their families, who are primarily Russian. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

At the beginning of December the German Economics Ministry released plans for an agreement with the Soviets to award contracts on the basis of public bids, with the USSR Defense Minister as the awarding authority, supported by a consortium of German construction associations. The first notices to tender are expected to appear in Moscow and the FRG at the beginning of 1991. According to the German Economics Ministry, the 37 locations will be grouped together into eight to 12 main projects, each controlled by its own general contractor responsible for overseeing all aspects of the construction work in his

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Figure 3
Selected Sites for Soviet Troop Housing Construction



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region. The contractors will be appointed periodically during the course of 1991 as the result of international bidding competitions. Plans also call for the construction of four plants in the USSR that will be able to supply prefabricated housing units. [REDACTED]

The Germans are also developing training programs for returning Soviet soldiers, according to a variety of sources:

- The Germans have agreed to a Soviet request to train the first group of 50 young officers—who are to be discharged after their return to the Soviet Union—in computer technology and management. This training is to take place during the remaining time that they are in Germany, according to an untested source, and to begin on 1 January 1991.

[REDACTED]

Bonn and Moscow also concluded the Stationing and Withdrawal Treaty on 12 October. The 50-page treaty creates the legal basis and sets out ground rules for the status and activities of the Soviet forces remaining in eastern Germany during the transitional period until 1994. During the negotiations, the Germans sought Soviet recognition of maximum German sovereignty, a clear withdrawal schedule, and severe restrictions on the military activities of residual Soviet forces.

The Germans did not get everything they wanted. The Soviets were reluctant to accommodate German demands for a specific timetable for withdrawals, and,

in the end, agreed only to provide an overall withdrawal plan and yearly progress reports on the status of withdrawals. Bonn had sought a withdrawal schedule that would have included specific departure dates for each unit, as well as the dates individual installations were to be closed.

[REDACTED]

Finally, the Germans wanted detailed information on remaining Soviet forces, claiming that this is required for public safety and not intelligence purposes. The Soviets agreed to provide a breakdown of the total strength of Soviet presence in Germany according to civilian and military classifications and to update this yearly until 1994. The principal issue being negotiated was the terms of the Soviets' withdrawal from eastern Germany. The Germans wanted to ensure that all Soviets—not just the soldiers—leave Germany by 31 December 1994. [REDACTED]

Significant differences of view existed over control of eastern German airspace and Soviet military flights following unification. According to German sources, the Soviets wanted to continue air operations as before, including responsibility for air defense over Soviet facilities. The Soviets also tried to dictate how the Germans would provide air defense coverage over the former GDR.

[REDACTED]

The Soviets wanted to prevent overflights of eastern Germany by any Luftwaffe aircraft, claiming this would have a very demoralizing effect on Soviet troops stationed there. The Germans, for their part, wanted to assert maximum control over German airspace and proposed the elimination of all Soviet military flights below 1,200 meters. [REDACTED]

According to the treaty compromise, German and Soviet fighter pilots will be subject to shared air traffic control over eastern Germany. The use of this airspace will be coordinated by a joint Soviet-German coordinating office (IUKO) that will handle all "misunderstandings and ambiguities" in the use of airspace. [REDACTED]

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For the first two years, rules for Soviet military flights will be similar to those in use now. Nighttime flying will be limited to three days a week and until 2200 hours local time, but will vary slightly, depending on the season of the year and will be reduced starting in January 1992. The night-flying program is to be agreed on six months in advance. Low-level flights will be strictly regulated, with flights below 600 meters generally not allowed. The Soviets will provide "provisional, informal" assurances that they will restrict low-flying zones to 300 meters over their own territory and 600 meters over other territory. [REDACTED]

Some air defense issues apparently were left vague as a result of disagreements. In deference to Moscow's opposition, Bonn will not base any fighters or Western surface-to-air missile systems in eastern Germany until after the Soviets withdraw, according to the US defense attache. The Defense Ministry initially planned to remove several squadrons of F-4s from NATO command and rotate them to airbases in eastern Germany. Current plans call for Luftwaffe aircraft deployed at Fassberg, an airfield in western Germany near the former intra-German border, to provide air defense for eastern Germany, although our attache reports that Moscow has opposed this move as well. Bonn will use current Soviet-designed radars and air defense systems in the inventory of the former East German National People's Army, including SAMs, and former East German Army personnel to provide coverage for eastern Germany. [REDACTED]

The stationing agreement deals with numerous other issues as well:

- *Criminal jurisdiction.* The Soviets have accepted the principle of German sovereignty. The Germans will have primary jurisdiction except when a crime is committed on a Soviet facility. Moscow agreed that no death sentences will be carried out by military authorities in eastern Germany.
- *Training and force movements.* Bonn was able to restrict the activities of Soviet forces by limiting the size of maneuvers to 13,000 soldiers and their military activity to "assigned properties," that is, barracks, shooting ranges, and training grounds. The Soviets must obtain prior approval and give two

to three weeks' notification before moving heavy equipment on roads outside their facilities and to use designated routes for this.

- *Financial compensation.* The Germans agreed to give the Soviets an additional lump sum of DM 150 million (\$100 million) to be used over four years for subsidizing the costs of rail transport. In effect, this will help to defray the Soviet costs of paying full current rail rates. A separate agreement will be negotiated with the Transportation Ministry on the details. The Germans hope to hold the Soviets responsible for upkeep on facilities provided by the former GDR. The Soviets, for their part, are seeking German compensation for alleged improvements the Soviets have made to the facilities [REDACTED]

The asylum issue—one of the most politically sensitive and difficult problems for both sides—was not resolved in the negotiations. Before agreeing not to treat deserters as asylum seekers, the Germans wanted the Soviets to dispense with the death sentence for deserters, but the Soviets agreed only that the sentence would not be carried out on German soil. Bonn rejected Soviet pressure for a clause in the treaty to return deserters to Soviet custody, since German law requires that asylum seekers be given a hearing. Acquiescence in such a demand would require some change in German laws, which could provoke a difficult domestic political debate. [REDACTED]

How Fast Can the Soviets Withdraw From Eastern Germany?

An assessment of the time required for the WGF to withdraw fully from eastern Germany can incorporate few precedents established by the departures of the Central Group of Forces (CGF) from Czechoslovakia

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and the Southern Group of Forces (SGF) from Hungary. The withdrawal of Soviet forces from these countries began in February and March, respectively, and is scheduled to be completed by next July. In comparison, the WGF has more than twice the number of combat units of the CGF and SGF combined, much larger logistic stocks, and a much larger support infrastructure. Housing the far larger number of personnel and dependents withdrawn from eastern Germany also will be a much greater problem for Moscow than housing those leaving the CGF and SGF.

We believe that the complete withdrawal of the WGF from eastern Germany could take from three to four years if Moscow relies principally on rail and road transport and uses only WGF personnel to prepare equipment and other materiel for departure. We assess that, under these circumstances, the combat units probably could be withdrawn in 18 to 24 months, and an additional 18 to 24 months would be required to remove the infrastructure and logistic stocks. To speed the removal of the WGF, the Soviets might use some of the growing number of unemployed eastern Germans to supplement substantially their available manpower, but this would require additional German financial assistance. Moscow may also attempt to sell Bonn some stocks or equipment—POL or trucks, for example—which the Germans may purchase to hasten the Soviet departure. Shorter withdrawal timetables could also be attained if a greater proportion than is currently allocated of German and Polish transport capability were to be dedicated to the withdrawal; but this would further disrupt commercial activities.

In addition, substantial quantities of equipment are being shipped from Germany's Baltic ports to the USSR. German authorities received information indicating that sea transport is proving so efficient for the Soviets that, by November, they hoped to add nine more roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) ships to the four already in use.¹ These authorities assessed that the

¹ US military personnel report that two Soviet RO/ROs at Rostock loaded an estimated 350 military vehicles—including 230 T-64 tanks—and an undetermined quantity of other cargo. Almost all of the equipment shipped through Baltic ports is then transhipped to other destinations in the Soviet Union.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Soviets could withdraw in 19 months or less. We believe that, with extensive use of maritime shipping, enough carriers are available to transport WGF's equipment and personnel out of Germany in less than two years. This process would be constrained, however, by the cargo-handling and transshipment capacities of the ports and their availability during inclement weather or periods of civil unrest.

The Soviets will undoubtedly expect the Germans to provide assistance with logistic problems during the withdrawal of their forces. The stationing treaty provides for a joint commission to oversee the withdrawal, probably similar to those formed in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The commission's composition is still unclear, but its primary function apparently will be to resolve complications that occur during the Soviet withdrawal.

Minor effort

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Soviets are concerned that this could cause significant delays in the withdrawal of the WGF.

[REDACTED]

The WGF withdrawal, however, faces the additional constraint of how to house the personnel and where to store the large quantities of a wide variety of logistic stocks and pre-positioned materiel now stockpiled in eastern Germany. Extensive German assistance with the housing problem will go a long way to facilitate a Soviet withdrawal in two years or less. In addition, logistic storage facilities in the western USSR must be prepared because there is insufficient storage capacity existing to accommodate all of the materiel

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likely to be withdrawn. The conservation of much of the equipment would require a surge of manpower and resources to perform the work.

What Could Go Wrong?

Current German and Soviet authorities will do everything possible to facilitate the Soviet withdrawal from eastern Germany and to avoid incidents that could fuel tension. These good intentions notwithstanding, in the coming months public opposition could increase and complicate German-Soviet relations if:

- Media reports give strong publicity to—or exaggerate—problems associated with the Soviet forces. There have already been instances where this has occurred.
- Hitches develop in the withdrawal of Soviet forces, or if the withdrawal is stopped or slowed once it has begun. For example, a Soviet diplomat told US officials in late October that domestic problems—in particular, the refusal of some republics to accept troops returning from Germany—could complicate Bonn's ability to fulfill its commitment to construct housing.
- There are public reports of environmental damage at Soviet facilities similar to that being found at facilities in Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and the Soviets still demand significant financial compensation for withdrawals.
- German resentment develops over the cost of maintaining Soviet forces. The Soviets could serve as convenient scapegoats at a time when Germans are experiencing disruptions stemming from unification and the likelihood of tax increases.
- German awareness grows of atrocities committed during and after World War II in Soviet-run detention camps; several mass graves have been discovered in 1990.⁴

⁴ Ten special camps existed in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany between 1945 and 1950. Recently opened archives reveal that 122,671 Germans passed through the camps between 1945 and 1950, a large number of whom died.

- The number of Soviet soldiers seeking asylum increases substantially to several thousand or more.
- Soviet soldiers gain growing notoriety for illegal activities, especially illegal arms dealing.
- Soviet commanders become dissatisfied that German authorities are not doing enough to prevent anti-Soviet incidents, including shootings of soldiers and destruction of Soviet war memorials.
- There are any instances of Soviets killing German citizens that are not in reaction to a clear German provocation.

Implications for the Soviet Union

Moscow is facing a complex situation with its military presence in Germany. The difficulties experienced by the Soviets with their forces in Germany apparently have advanced their withdrawal schedules despite the overwhelming logistic problems, but a disorderly departure could spark Soviet domestic criticism and raise broader issues that might delay the withdrawals and jeopardize Soviet-German relations.

The Soviets need a smooth withdrawal of their forces; they can neither face the consequences at home of a disorderly departure nor allow Soviet soldiers to run amok in Germany and threaten their relations with Bonn. Soviet acquiescence in NATO membership for a unified Germany helped to open the door to one of Gorbachev's major foreign policy objectives—the acceptance of the Soviet Union as an equal partner in building a new “European home.” The cost of German unification, however, included the dismantling of a key piece of the Soviet security system built up over more than 45 years. This is proving to be a “painful and difficult” experience for the military, as Marshal Akhromeyev admitted in a recent interview, and is causing repercussions abroad and at home.

If the military is slow in implementing the withdrawal agreement, and we judge that this is unlikely, opposition to Soviet forces in Germany probably would

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grow. Even with a stationing agreement in place, this could threaten Soviet-German relations. For example, in an incident in October, citizens and environmental groups staged a protest in the city of Petkus against the "careless" treatment of the natural environment by Soviet forces in their training area and against noise from low-flying aircraft and from range firing. They demanded an end to military maneuvers and threatened to boycott delivery of goods to Soviet barracks. The call to end maneuvers altogether is stronger than previous demands, and, as the Germans are well aware, the threat to withhold delivery of goods hits the Soviets in a particularly vulnerable area. [REDACTED]

The Soviet leadership seems willing to speed up its pullout, but is probably reluctant to antagonize the military or spark debate in the USSR on the pace of the withdrawals. [REDACTED]

If, however, Moscow decides to accelerate its soldiers' departure before they can be accommodated in the Soviet Union, it could spark large-scale protests by the Soviet military at home and in Germany. The Soviets' lack of preparation for resettling officers and their families has already caused a public outcry:

- The wives of 400 Soviet officers petitioned Chancellor Kohl in an open letter published in the German press on 3 October to block plans by the Soviet military to send them and their children to a camp near Chernobyl. Although the wives may have been

responding to rumors (a later report in a conservative Soviet newspaper denied the move), their fears indicate the decline of confidence in the central government to look after its citizens.

- In late August, officers and their wives staged a protest in eastern Germany against plans to send them to the Caucasus. This probably involved personnel from the 12th Guards Tank Division, which probably is in the process of relocating to the Transcaucasus Military District. [REDACTED]

The plight of returning Soviet soldiers has become a major issue in the USSR and has been taken up by conservative Supreme Soviet deputies unhappy with Moscow's acquiescence in a united Germany's membership in NATO. Gorbachev and Shevardnadze appear to have underestimated its implications in their defense of the German settlement. Shevardnadze has already been summoned by the joint session of the Supreme Soviet to respond to the deputies' attacks. If the debate becomes more stridently anti-German, some deputies might challenge Gorbachev's pursuit of a special relationship with Bonn and complicate Soviet-German relations. Although unlikely to unseat Gorbachev or to forestall his German policy, such a development could prove an annoying distraction and complicate the troop withdrawal issue even further. [REDACTED]

Implications for Germany

German leaders face a dilemma over the Soviet presence. On the one hand, they seek to dampen tensions and guard against incidents to avoid disrupting potentially important relations with Moscow and to avoid anything that could delay as rapid a Soviet withdrawal as possible. On the other hand, Bonn may believe that growing problems for the Soviets would encourage them to get out of Germany faster. [REDACTED]

Kohl no doubt is aware that the Soviet withdrawal could cost Bonn even more money. The Chancellor probably would be willing to allocate more funds to

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German Views on the Cost of the Soviet Withdrawal

German officials have sought to put the best face on their agreement to provide DM 13 billion to support the Soviet withdrawal from the former GDR. So far, there has been little opposition to the government's decision. Most Germans appear to accept that this was a small but necessary price to pay in order to achieve an important national objective. The treaty containing the financial commitments was approved by the Bundestag with an overwhelming majority that included the opposition Social Democrats.

Media commentary also has been generally supportive of the government's action:

- *The centrist Stuttgarter Zeitung opined that "the DM 13.5 billion are a good investment in national sovereignty, international disarmament, and, last but not least, in bilateral relations with the Soviet Union."*
- *One right-of-center publication claimed that "the DM 13.5 billion are indeed well invested. What would all Chancellors since 1949 have paid just to get the Germans out of the Soviet grip? Helmut Kohl and Hans-Dietrich Genscher managed just that...."*

Public attitudes toward the financial assistance—or Soviet demands for additional assistance—could become more hostile in the future. The Germans still are on an emotional high as a result of unification. Germans in the former GDR are only now beginning to feel the economic pinch associated with unification. Germans in the western part of the country so far have been spared tax increases to cover the costs of unity, but their luck could run out soon.

cover Soviet transportation costs, to build more housing, or to compensate the Soviets for supplies left behind in an effort to speed the withdrawal. His government might also be willing to extend additional credit guarantees to help Gorbachev cushion the psychological blow of the appearance of a chaotic

"retreat" in defeat. But such generosity could carry a domestic political price for Kohl, particularly if anti-Soviet sentiment increases as a result of incidents involving the WGF. Such sentiments could weaken Kohl's support base among conservatives and give more extremist rightwing elements such as the Republikaner a new lease on life.

Mass desertions—including an upsurge in soldiers seeking asylum—would create serious problems for Kohl. For the moment, the government and opposition Social Democrats agree that—morally and constitutionally—Germany cannot turn back those seeking asylum without a proper hearing. This consensus is easy to maintain now because the number of asylum seekers is low and this issue does not appear to be a significant burden on German-Soviet relations. The consensus, in our view, would become much harder to maintain if the number of asylum seekers were to climb into the thousands. Even though Bonn might continue to protect the petitioners, the prospective economic and social costs of integrating former Soviets into German society could help bring on a difficult political debate over asylum policy and further fuel antiforeigner sentiment that could be exploited by extremist groups. Under these circumstances, we believe Bonn would look for ways short of making changes in Germany's asylum policies to discourage Soviet desertions.

Implications for the United States

For the United States, the lingering presence of Soviet forces may in the near term make Bonn more appreciative of the US and other Allied military presence. But German ire directed at Soviet forces could also weaken the public differentiation between the US presence and the Soviet presence. Such mirror imaging could make the US presence less tenable over time:

- If tensions with Soviet soldiers exacerbate antiforeigner sentiment, Germans may feel that all foreign forces pose a threat or infringe on German sovereignty.

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[redacted] an overwhelming majority of eastern Germans already favors the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Germany, and eastern German deputies make up almost a quarter of the all-German Bundestag elected in December.

- Revelations about Soviet environmental abuses could reinforce German perceptions that all military activity is environmentally hazardous and focus greater attention on similar problems at US and NATO facilities. Indeed, the left-leaning news weekly, *Der Spiegel*, recently ran an article on environmental damage at Soviet and US military facilities in Germany.
- Greater public perception that subsidizing the stay and withdrawal of Soviet troops is too costly could spill over to all foreign forces and fuel complaints that the US presence is also too costly.
- German authorities, especially at the state and local levels, may even seek to play the Allies and Soviets off against each other. They might warn the Allies, for example, that their image will be damaged if they continue to do things that the Soviets are no longer doing, such as conducting particular types of training activities. [redacted]

The issue of Soviet deserters also could become an irritant in US-German and US-Soviet relations. It is not a problem at the moment, since any deserters turned over to German authorities by US authorities are protected by the Germans. As of late October, [redacted] there had been only two cases of Soviet soldiers appearing at US facilities. If Bonn were to agree with Moscow, however, to begin turning deserters over to Soviet authorities, the United States might be forced to rethink its current policy if it believes the deserters should receive protection. [redacted]

The Soviet presence also will present counterintelligence challenges. [redacted]

[redacted] the Soviets have a greater opportunity to monitor US and Allied activities in Germany and gain access to controlled technologies. The Soviets also will have more opportunities to establish contacts with American servicemen throughout Germany. [redacted]

Finally, in the longer term, problems resulting from the Soviet presence could indirectly complicate US-Soviet relations. Worst case scenarios, such as serious confrontations between eastern Germans and Soviet forces, or the even more remote possibility of the Soviets reneging on their withdrawal commitment, could lead to heightened East-West tensions. Played to the extreme, the Germans might use military force, or call on NATO to assist, in isolating and constraining remaining Soviet forces. Conversely, US-German relations could become strained in such a situation if Bonn's response to heightened tensions or Soviet foot-dragging takes the form of further efforts to appease Moscow, including a weakening of Germany's ties to NATO or an offer to order the withdrawal of all foreign forces from German soil. [redacted]

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Appendix

Selected Chronology

The following is a selected all-source chronology of events since April 1990 involving the Western Group of Forces in Germany:

- 6 April** Soviet soldier accidentally wounds East German citizen during target practice near Wittenburg; citizens later demanded closure of the shooting range.
- 11 April** Ten thousand East Germans sign petition for closure of Soviet airbase in Altenburg to protest aircraft noise.
- 22 April** Drunken Soviet soldier crashes tank into the corner of a house in the East German town of Crawinkel.
- 3 May** Several thousand East Germans demonstrate in Grossenhain against noise from Soviet aircraft.
- 4 May** Demonstration at Weimar against Soviet troop presence.
- 11 May** Almost 5,000 East Germans petitioned for closure of the Soviet airbase at Demmin-Tutow because of noise from Soviet aircraft.
- 15 May** East German environmental group writes an open letter to Disarmament and Defense Minister Eppelmann demanding that Soviet training areas be given back to the forestry industry for cultivation because soil and water have been contaminated with aviation fuel.
- 21 May** Demonstration by 8,000 citizens demanding closure of Neuruppin airbase after a Soviet plane accidentally dropped three bombs while on a training flight.
- 12 June** Soviet military captain stationed in Berlin leaves his unit and goes to the Western sectors of Berlin, probably to apply for political asylum.
- 22 June** East German dike master at Reitwein closed amphibious training area to the Soviets because of property damage caused by Soviet troops; blocks convoy of Soviet troops in the process.
- 23 June** Thousands of citizens demand closure of airfield in Polenz, near Leipzig, because of noise from Soviet aircraft.
- 25 June** East German police kill a Soviet soldier after he took a family hostage.

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Late June	East German citizens group protests at a Soviet missile base in Koenigsbrueck because they thought it contained chemical weapons; went away satisfied after they were allowed to inspect the base. Demonstrators march through Soviet housing area in Wuensdorf; animosity was directed toward Soviet civilian employees competing for jobs, housing, and consumer goods.
Early July	Soviet lieutenant caught stripping a car for parts in West Germany. Soviet military captain caught shoplifting in Helmstedt, West Germany; returned to Soviet authorities.
2 July	Soviet press reports alleged incident in which a Soviet citizen was set on fire by unknown civilians while walking in West Berlin; could be disinformation on eve of CPSU Congress since we have no independent Western confirmation of this incident.
19 July	Citizens of Werneuchen demanded closure of Soviet military base because local orchards were being contaminated with kerosene from the base.
24 July	Three Soviet soldiers stationed in GDR escaped to Federal Republic and asked for political asylum.
30 July	Five Soviet soldiers stationed in GDR escaped to Lower Saxony and asked for political asylum.
Early August	Illegal arms dealing between Soviet soldiers and dealers in militaria broken up in West Berlin.
1 August	Soviet military vehicle containing six intoxicated Soviet soldiers stopped by West Berlin police for endangering motor vehicle traffic on a public street. In the course of the arrest, the driver crashed the vehicle into a police patrol car. Group detained at a West Berlin police station, then handed over to officer from Soviet military authorities in Potsdam.
12 August	A young Soviet noncommissioned officer requested asylum at a US military facility in Frankfurt after deserting from his unit in eastern Germany.
15 August	West Berlin police divers removed 26 rifles, an automatic carbine, an automatic carbine barrel, an antitank rocket, three fragmentation grenades, and five concussion grenades from the Teltow Canal. All were of Soviet manufacture, and German police felt they were part of a Potsdam trash dump weapons cache. Soviet army road march blocked by striking East German civilians. (Soviets were caught up in an East German internal affair and did not cause the incident.)
16 August	Soviet soldier found murdered near Perleberg, East Germany.

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27 August German citizens from a group called "Against Aircraft Noise" set up nine tents in the approaches to the Soviet military airfield in Neuruppin as a protest against continuing aircraft noise.

27 August A Soviet sentry was shot and killed while standing guard at an ammunition depot near Perleberg, East Germany.

29 August Soviet soldiers stationed near Magdeburg demonstrated in the center of the village against being sent to the Soviet Caucasus; dispersed when their superiors threatened them with disciplinary actions.

2 September Soviet forces held an "open house," permitting citizens to have access to their Berlin Brigade.

10 September Soviet soldiers tried to rob an East German electronics store in Wittstock. They escaped following a high-speed police chase. The truck they were in overturned, spilling grenades and bullets on the autobahn.

19 September Local politicians from across the GDR met with the Volkskammer Committee for Disarmament and Defense to discuss problems associated with Soviet forces.

Late September In the Guestrow area, a submachinegun was stolen by unidentified east Germans from a soldier on guard; elements of his tank regiment joined forces with the German police to investigate the incident.

28 September A soldier who appeared to be of high rank and his wife contacted authorities in Hessen to request asylum. According to the Hessian Ministry of the Interior, he was the 26th soldier stationed in eastern Germany to have requested asylum in the state in the last two weeks of September.

2 October Vyacheslav Dashichev advocated the immediate withdrawal of Soviet troops from eastern Germany. He noted that "there is no longer any point for our troops to stay in Germany" and that "the devil finds work for idle hands."

3 October According to a press report citing Soviet military authorities, right-wing extremists were threatening to attack a Soviet barracks to celebrate unification.

A Soviet schoolbus was fired upon by Germans in the Techentin area.

5 October According to press reports, the Soviet military procurator sought to defend Soviet forces publicly. He claimed that, "Almost all arms sales by Soviet servicemen have been provoked by German partners. What Soviet soldier can stand firm at the sight of a Western car?"

Two Germans attacked a Soviet guard at an unidentified unit near Muhlhausen, Germany. Guard was shot in the leg when he apprehended the Germans.

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- 7 October** According to press reports, citizens and environmental groups in the Petkus area demonstrated against Soviet military activities. The citizens threatened to stop deliveries of goods to Soviet facilities if firing exercises and some training flights were not terminated.
- 10 October** A youth-oriented German variety magazine, *Tempo*, described the experience of two of its reporters who claimed they walked unchallenged into the Officers Club of WGF headquarters in Wuensdorf and arranged to buy antitank mines, handgrenades, ammunition, and smokebombs for DM 3,000. In Jueterborg, the reporters supposedly bought a shoulder-fired grenade launcher (RPG-7) and a belt of antitank grenades from Soviet Air Force officers for DM 2,500. After caching the acquired weapons, the reporters claim they informed the German police of the whereabouts of the buried arms.
- 12 October** Soviet and German officials sign an agreement on the stationing and withdrawal of Soviet forces.
- 15 October** According to German press reports, a Soviet major applied to Soviet military authorities to leave the army and remain in Germany, but was told he would first have to return to the Soviet Union with his family. More than 20 armed Soviet paratroopers surrounded the major's home in the center of Gotha. The standoff was resolved when the major agreed to return to the Soviet Union to apply to emigrate, and his family was taken to Hessen with the support of Thuringian authorities.
- 20 October** Soviet forces conducted an "open house" at Weimar. According to Western press reports, Soviet soldiers complained to journalists about their alleged poor treatment by Soviet military authorities.
- 23 October** A US intelligence officer traveling with German citizens as part of a "Four-Wheel-Drive Club" outing reported that Soviet soldiers—on the margins of a training exercise—approached the citizens for beer and cigarettes. They returned to the German camping site the next morning with items for sale, including wool hats (DM 20), boots (DM 10), radios (DM 10), and 80 liters of gas (DM 20). Live rounds of ammunition reportedly were free.
- 7 November** Soviet soldier found unconscious near Potsdam; appeared to have been beaten; died the following day.

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